

May 19, 2014

SUBMITTED @ ZBA
PUB HRG. 5/19/14

Dear Zoning Board of Appeals,

As abutters to the proposed location of the Starbucks, we strongly oppose the granting of the Special Permit to allow this move on the grounds that it does not meet the Special Permit Criteria of location, activity type and mix, and access.

Location: "The site should be able to accommodate the proposed use without substantial impacts on municipal infrastructure and with minimum traffic impacts on abutting residential neighborhoods."

Activity Type and Mix: "The use should complement the character and the scale of existing buildings/uses/activities in the neighborhood and not create undesirable impacts."

Access: "Vehicular and pedestrian access/egress should be safe and convenient and shall be designed to minimize impacts on the abutting public ways."

On a practical level, what it comes down to is parking and traffic. In its current location, the Starbucks parking lot is often near capacity. This is in addition to the available parking in the municipal lot and the commercial district of Cushing Square. The proposed area of 6-8 Trapelo Road cannot accommodate this amount of parking. Thus, by default, the residentially-zoned neighborhood on the other side of Trapelo Road will see an increase in parking and hence, traffic. Oak Avenue is a narrow street with one-side parking. It is not meant to accommodate the needs of the type of traffic that Starbucks will generate.

We are NOT against development... this area is already developed. These are not empty store fronts, but rather the location of several long-standing businesses in our community. Why must we evict these tenants when there are so many empty store fronts in other commercial districts throughout Belmont? Why would we dislocate businesses that have been here for years for a business that is only going to be there temporarily? And then what happens when they move to Cushing Village? We have an empty store front in this location?

An additional concern that we have is with the process of this proposal. The Special Permit/Variance Process, #4 & 5, suggest and/or require advance notice and discussion of such requests of the Zoning Board of Appeals. There was no attempt on the part of the applicant to discuss this request with the abutters. With only 3 days, we have been able to generate much reaction. Imagine what we might have accomplished if we had been given adequate notice.

Sincerely,

Rita Butzer and Daniel Carpenter

6 Oak Ave., Belmont